The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts of the latest interpretations of matters affecting labor according to the labor text, legislation, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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Are You REGISTERED?

Republicans and Democrats To Debate Campaign Issues On New AFL Radio Series

Washington.—With the cooperation of the Democratic and Republican National Committees, the American Federation of Labor will submit in the forthcoming conventions of both parties with four politically significant and newsworthy radio debates during the month of June.

These nationwide broadcasts will pit outstanding spokesmen of both parties against each other in debates on the major issues of the political campaign. Representatives of the American Federation of Labor and the United States Chamber of Commerce will participate in each of the discussions to present the points of view of labor and business.

The purpose of this radio series is to provide a preview of the platforms policies of both parties and of the candidates so that American voters can become better informed.

The series will be carried on the "America United" program and broadcast over a nationwide NBS network for four consecutive Sundays beginning June 6. David Brinkley, NBC commentator, will serve as moderator.

The Democratic Party spokesmen listed for participation in the debates include J. Howard McGrath, chairman of the Democratic National Committee; Tom Connally, of Texas, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Senator Elbert D. Thomas, of Utah.

The Republicans had not yet made the final selections of their speakers as this edition went to press.

The first program in the series, to be broadcast from Washington on June 6, will deal with the problem of rising prices. The question to be debated is: "Should Congress Act to Halt Further Inflation?" The labor and industry representatives on the program will ask both the Democratic speakers to reveal how they will attack the problem if their party policy is on the vital issue. Leon Shishkin will represent the AFL and Emerson P. Schmidt, the Chamber of Commerce.

Tentative listing of the succeeding broadcasts in the series follows:

June 13, from Washington—"How Can World Peace Be Safeguarded?"

June 20, from Philadelphia on the eve of the Republican National Convention—"Do Our Labor Laws Need to Be Changed?"

June 27, from Washington—"Should the Social Security Laws Be Improved?"

The "America United" programs are broadcast over the NBC network from 1 to 1:30 p.m., Eastern Daylight Saving Time. Stations are requested to broadcast at a later time in some cities in the chain. Please consult your local newspapers for the exact time of these programs in your locality and make certain to listen.

Outright Repeal of Taft-Hartley Law Held Only Remedy for Its Ill Effects

New York.—Senator James E. Murray, of Montana and J. Albert Woll, chief counsel for the American Federation of Labor, joined in declaring that the ill-effects of the Taft-Hartley law cannot be cured by amendments and that the only remedy for the troubles it has brought to labor and the country is outright repeal.

Their addresses were broadcast from Washington over WJZ-NBC in a program sponsored jointly by the New York and New Jersey State Federations of Labor.

Senator Murray declared that 8 months experience under the law has made it evident that "this is one of the most unwise pieces of legislation ever to be enacted in the field of labor-management relations."

"It's punitive purpose and certain effect," he said, "is so injurious to our economy that no amendment can cure it. Its total rejection is the only remedy for a law which is causing disastrous consequences in the field of labor-management relations."

The Senator stressed the importance of collective bargaining in the nation's economy because it affords individual workers the opportunity of acquiring the purchasing power necessary to keep the wheels of industry turning and goods flowing from farm and factory to purchaser. He said:

"It was because I recognized these considerations that I opposed the enactment of the Taft-Hartley Act. I opposed the act because it was designed to reduce the bargaining strength of labor at a time when concentration of economic power in American industry was at its highest point in our history. I opposed the act because it was designed to weaken labor's bargaining power at a time when American industry was making the largest peacetime profits in its history and when millions of American workers were unable to subsist on an average annual income which is hardly commensurate necessary to maintain an adequate standard of living.

In his address, Mr. Woll summed up the experience under the Taft-Hartley law in a 7-point brief outline as follows:

"1. It has restricted and denied freedom of speech, direct and indirect, political action to American workers in their relations to trade unions.

"2. It has hampered the organization of unorganized workers and left them helpless to deal with unfair employers.

"3. It has impeded true collective bargaining and has placed employers at advantages, increased their resistance to legitimate union requests and stirred up suspicion and mistrust of the unions.

"4. It has disrupted long-standing peaceful collective bargaining relationships between labor and management in many industries.

"5. It has limited the opportunity for the unions to obtain welfare funds, pensions, hospitalization and insurance benefits, and services of the kind needed for continuing pay is most urgent.

"6. It has denied labor its traditional right to stand together in common cause against substandard and classified practices which endanger the American standard of living.

"7. It has placed agencies of the federal government and the courts, administration, service and functions, in the false position of fighting the unions on the controversial issues seeking to protect their rights and to improve their conditions."

Strikes Increase Sharply; Time Lost Highest In Year

Washington.—Idleness arising out of labor-management controversies rose sharply to an estimated 8,600,000 man-days in April, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported.

This lost-time figure was a third greater than in March. It was also larger than for any month since April, 1947, when the nationwide telephone engage occurred.

Most of April's idleness resulted from the bituminous coal and meat-packing disputes, issues of which began in March. The soft coal controversy was terminated during April, but the meat-packing controversy continued well into May. Two of the largest strikes which began in April involved about 17,000 CIO workers of the Caterpillar Tractor Co. at Peoria, Illinois, and another 15,000 members of the International Association of Machinists at the Seattle plant of the Boeing Aircraft Co.

The total number of new stoppages increased from 225 in March to 275 in April. Including 1,000 workers who began April idleness in previous months, about 400 disputes involving 625,000 workers were in effect at one time or another during the month.

All known work stoppages, arising out of labor-management disputes, involving 6 or more workers and continuing for a full day or more, are included in reports of the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Figures on workers involved and man-days idle do not include workers in other establishments directly involved in a stoppage. They do not measure the indirect unemployment, if any, in other establishments whose employes are made idle as a result of material or service shortages.

N. Y. MUSICIANS UNIT SETS FREE PROGRAMS

New York.—A quarter of a million people are expected to hear free musical performances, from classical to "jive," sponsored by Local 802 of the American Federation of Musicians, according to an announcement by Richard McCann, president of the local.

The programs, initiated by AFM President James C. Petrillo, under the union's recording and transcription royalty fund, will, on the basis of preliminary schedules, include 675 performances to be given at public schools, veterans and music halls, hospitals, homes for the aged and infirm, and settlement houses.

The first performance in the series took place on Memorial Day when a 50-piece, Local 802, band participated in the parade of the Grand Army of the Republic.

Employment Shows Decrease For April

Washington.—Employment in non-farm industries dropped 270,000 to a total of 45,700,000 in mid-April but nearly as a result of work stoppages and seasonal curtailments, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported.

Indicating a similar decline took place last year at this time, April, 1948 employment continued nearly 1 million above a year ago. Most of the over-the-year gain was concentrated in the nonmanufacturing industries, particularly trade, service, and public utilities.

In contrast to the over-all drop during April, factory employment considerably increased from the previous month. Short coal supplies somewhat reduced employment in blast furnaces, steel works and rolling mills, while the resultant steel shortages were more extensively reflected in employment declines in many of the metal fabricating industries, and transportation equipment industries.

Declines were general throughout the nondurable goods industries. The textile-apparel-leather group dropped 125,000 workers as the slack season set in. Largest decline was in the apparel group, where all component industries reported some slackening the month. Nearly all textile industries also laid off workers, reversing the steadily rising trend since last November. Although the April drop appears to be seasonal, there have been reports of layoffs attributed to high prices as well as some decrease in foreign orders.

The drop of 90,000 in the food products group was largely due to the extensive, although brief, coal and packing industry. Seasonally expanded activity was indicated by the dairy, cereal, and beverage industries. Nearly all of the decrease in the lumber products group took place in tire and tube plants as a result of seasonal cutbacks in production.

AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS SHOW DECLINE IN APRIL

Washington.—Reflecting the effects of steel shortages and work stoppages in coal mines, average gross weekly wage weekly earnings for production workers in the nation's manufacturing establishments decreased from $52.07 to $51.56, according to preliminary estimates made available by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The average week also declined slightly to an average of 40 hours, the lowest since mid-April.

Workers' declines in the iron and steel and automobile groups were largely responsible for the reduction. Both dropped 40 to 40.4 hours for the durable goods division. Reflecting the shorter workweek, weekly earnings in plants producing durable goods, averaging $54.61, were half a dollar below the March figure. Gross hourly earnings in the durable goods industries continued at the April level which has prevailed since last December.

WHOLESALE PRICES INDEX NOW 1% BELOW '48 PEAK

Washington. — Average wholesale prices were unchanged during the week ended May 22, 1948, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor. The bureau's comprehensive index remained at 162.2 percent of the 1926 average. It was only 0.2 percent below the level recorded for the week prior to the last week in February, 1948, and 1.2 percent below the high point reached in mid-January.

AFL Opposes Enactment of Mundt Bill; Hits the Infringement of Civil Liberties

Washington.—The American Federation of Labor went on record against enactment of the Mundt-Nixon bill to control communist activities in the United States.

Lewis G. Hines, national legislative representative for the AFL, in testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee declared the AFL believes "there are serious implications in the Mundt-Nixon bill that would infringe upon our civil liberties and might conceivably be detrimental to our labor unions."

In lieu of the proposed legislation to control communists, Mr. Hines recommended enactment of a vigorous social justice program and repeal of the Taft-Hartley law to remove the conditions of oppression, hunger and want on which communism breeds and ultimately spreads.

Voicing the objections of the AFL to the proposed bill, Hines said:

"The bill as a whole is objectionable. For one thing, the definitions are so broad and loosely worded that it would be almost impossible for any organization, such as, for instance, the American Civil Liberties Union, to know whether or not it might be subjected to penalties and prosecutions and thus subject to the calumnies and restrictions of the act.

"It is quite possible for a person either to become a member of to make some financial contribution to some organization which he feels to be a worthwhile one and at a later date finds that the attorney general has determined that such organization is a communist organization, and thus the individual, in turn, is publicly branded as a communist member.

"The attorney general is given unprecedented powers to outlaw organizations and to require production of records, membership lists and documents in support of his administrative hearings.

"The principle of guilt by association, for the first time, brought into existence in the American way of life, a principle which heretofore has been considered one advocated only by very totalitarian dictatorships which is the purported purpose of the bill to proscribe.

"Furthermore, the entire principle of requiring registration as a condition to the exercise of civil liberties would seem to be contrary to the principles announced by the Supreme Court.

"As a means of combatting communism, Mr. Hines urged action by Congress to enact legislation to improve the conditions of the common men and women of the land, he said:

"Encouragement should be given to organized labor as the one instrumentality here in America that can successfully cope with the onward march of communism."

Says Wages Not Prime Cause of Inflation; Holds Rising Prices a Threat to Market

St. Paul.—Boris Shishkin, AFL economic analyst, declared that high wages are not the prime cause of inflation, the contemporary evil which threatens to choke off the market for manufactured goods.

In an address before the Controllers Institute of America, Mr. Shishkin placed the blame for soaring prices on the excessive volume of money in circulation in relation to the price level.

The AFL economist said in part:

"Continuing rise in price inflation is presenting an increasing threat of choking off the flow of finished manufactured products, especially consumer durable goods, while the buying power is increasingly diverted to food, fuel, and other raw materials necessities. But the prime source of this illness is the excessive volume of money in circulation in relation to prices.

"Wages are not a direct or sole force responsible for high prices. In fact, quite often, wages follow prices far outstripped wage costs. Between 1939 and 1947, for example, in May, 1947, the labor cost per ton of steel was $6.65 and by December, 1947, $11.84, a rise of 19 cents a ton. Although labor is not the direct cause of high prices, it is the victim of them. Labor is not the prime cause of inflation, but it is the first to suffer from it.

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JOB PLACEMENTS INCREASE FOR HANDICAPPED WORKERS

Washington.—Disabled veterans and other handicapped workers are having less trouble getting jobs, the United States Employment Service reported. Ellery C. Goodwin, director of the service, said the general rise in employment had brought improved opportunities for veterans and State employment offices placed 2,000 handicapped workers in nonfarm jobs in April, an increase of 14 percent over the previous month. But Goodwin said there still was a backlog of about 36,000 disabled veterans who were looking for jobs.

MARRIED WOMEN IN JOBS EXCEED SINGLE WOMEN

Chicago.—A man with a briefcase full of statistics put the damper yesterday on any girlish hopes that marriage is the logical way to keep out of the wage-earner class.

Meany Says Repeal of Taft-Hartley Law Hinges on Defeating Congress Labor Foes

New York.—The 8,000,000 members of the American Federation of Labor must throw themselves wholeheartedly into the fight to "change the personnel of Congress" if the workers of the nation are to get rid of the Taft-Hartley Act, George Meany, secretary-treasurer of the AFL, said here in an address before the New York City Central Trades and Labor Council.

He urged every trade unionist to participate in labor's political education campaign. "The only way to defeat the Taft-Hartley Act," he said, "is to defeat the members of Congress who voted for it. That means more than merely the beginning of what the enemies of labor have in store for the nation's trade unions.

"If the enemies of labor should find that Congress is still in their pocket next January," he said, "they will pass such legislation as will make the Taft-Hartley Act look like the most advanced law since Magna Charta."

Speaking to a capacity audience composed not only of delegates to the council but large numbers of other trade unionists, Mr. Meany said:

"We have to do the job that's to do it. Let's do it with the same determination, courage and zeal that they showed here and the other pioneers of labor used in the battles that they were forced to wage.

"We, too, have to fight in order to live. We have to keep our forces in the unions alive and effective for the protection of the millions of our fellows who work for wages."

Declaring that organized labor doesn't have any "choice," Mr. Meany said:

"Labor is in politics to stay. We must fight. We have no choice about changing anything in the Taft-Hartley law in labor's favor until we change Congress, until we change the personnel in Congress.

"There is only one way of accomplishing that. It must be done at the ballot box, in the primaries.

"The enemies of labor have thrown a challenge at us. We are accepting that challenge."

The applause appeal directed at the many officers of local unions who were in his audience, Mr. Meany said:

"The whole political education effort is terribly important. It will succeed or fail at the local level. That is where the money has to be collected. That is where our people vote.

"Now I am speaking to an audience in which there are a large number of local union officers, and I want to make this appeal to you just as strong as I possibly can. I know you men are busy, most of you are very busy, just trying to keep abreast of your membership, handling grievances, participating in negotiations, taking care of your office work and doing all the dozens of other necessary tasks which go with the job of being a local union officer or representative. I know what the problem is because I have been a business agent myself.

"You don't have much spare time, I know that—but political education is so vital, so important to the welfare of every one of us, that in my judgment it must be put on a par with every one of your basic activities."

Mr. Meany flayed the willingness of Congress to ride herd on the workers of the nation and lashed reactionary Big Business for its support of "antilabor moves of every kind." The Taft-Hartley Act, he charged, was fathered by "the architects of our national calamity of 1929." The reference was to the Wall Street crash and the years of bitter depression which followed.

The AFL secretary ridiculed claims by Senator Taft, Senator Ball and the National Association of Manufacturers that the Taft-Hartley Act is in reality a "beneficial" law.

"Mr. Taft and Mr. Ball and the anti-labor Chicken Manufacturers' officer of the NAM keep trying to persuade the citizens that the law they foolioned is a good piece of legislation," Mr. Meany declared. "Let us not stop and analyze this situation for a minute. If the Taft-Hartley Act is really and truly the good law that the writers of labor-baiting say it is, why must the NAM and its membership spend millions of propaganda to 'prove it'?"

Mr. Meany cited the "out effect" of the Taft-Hartley Act, passed one year ago, as a prime example of this, in that, "instead of promoting better labor-management relations, more mature and more civilized relations, it has created bitterness and hatred where they did not exist before.

The AFL leader, in his 5,000 word address, emphasized that the American Federation of Labor is not dedicated to any traditional political policy, as various columnists have maintained. That policy, he pointed out, is expressed in the slogan: "Support your friends and defeat your enemies."

"There has not been and there will be no departure from that policy," Mr. Meany said. "The one thing which we are now doing is to use a better method of getting it done.

"The old procedure of issuing endorsements and adopting resolutions is not effective in itself. We must have real political action right down to the precinct level. We must use our full strength at the polls, and then we will not need to worry about the support our friends and defeat our enemies will be won on election day on our promises.

"And when we do that we can rest assured that the welfare of the people will come first and not the selfish interest to the members of the Congress of the United States."

Senate Lifts Ceiling on Entry of DP's; Votes to Admit 200,000 In 2-Year Period

Washington.—The Senate voted an amendment to a pending bill which would increase from 205 the country of 200,000 European displaced persons during the next 2 years.

The change, permitting the entry of 100,000 of the European homeless in each of the next 2 years, represented a doubling of the ceiling established by the House Displaced Persons Act. The pending Wiley-Stevenson bill would increase the total of 50,000 a year for 2 years with provision that the first year's total was nonfilled.

The increased figure brought the total in the Senate bill in line with the 200,000 admissions authorized by the House bill that had been approved by the House Judiciary Committee.

The American Federation of Labor hailed the drive in the Senate which resulted in the lifting of the ceiling on the admission of displaced persons each year. This action was in accordance with the AFL declaration of conditions calling for the admission of 100,000 DP's each year over a 4-year period.

Action on the greater number of admissions came on an amendment offered by Senator Homer Ferguson of Michigan, H. Alexander Smith of New Jersey, Senator Thurman Cooper of Kentucky, Leverett Saltonstall of Massachusetts, Senator Hugh of Oregon, all Republicans, and J. Howard Pavne of Rhode Island.

The Senate also adopted by a voice vote an amendment by Senator Revercomb, Republican of West Virginia, under 21 years of age be included in the "orphans" labor category to which 50 percent of the admissions have been assigned under the terms of the committee bill.

The Ferguson and other conditions will be the target of the vicious opposition bloc in fighting for a change to have admissions based on the quota system established by the DP camps instead of the committee's plan to allot the visas to the countries had to be from countries "annexed" by the Communist government, meaning the Soviet Union.

One Family In Four To Live On Credit Or Savings In '48

Washington.—The devastating effect of inflation upon American families was highlighted by a Federal Reserve Board study showing that one out of every four families will overspend its income this year.

This conclusion was based on a board survey of consumer finances which disclosed that families plan to keep spending freely for new homes and goods—using their credit or savings if necessary.

The survey, a sampling of consumer attitudes made by the board for the last three years, showed the "general financial status of consumers" is still strong, but that it began to show signs of weakening. Among these signs were these significant items:

That those over-spending income levels last year included large numbers in the $3,000-to-$5,000-a-year income class, whereas overspending in 1946 was concentrated in the under $3,000 class.

There was a "particularly significant rise" in the number of overspenders in the $5,000 annual income class.

Also, about 3 million more families or individuals completely cashed out their holdings of savings bonds.

Out of the 17 million persons buying furniture, refrigerators, radios, washing machines, ranges and other appliances, 9 million did so on the instalment plan—nearly twice the number who did so in 1946.

On the other hand, consumer incomes as a whole rose more than 10 percent last year.

"Almost 60 percent of all spending units (family groups or individuals) reported higher money incomes in 1947 than in 1946, but a considerable number felt that because of the higher cost of living they were worse off financially at the end of the year than at the beginning," the report said.

SEN. TAFT HELD COOL TO OLEO TAX REPEAL

Washington.—According to press reports, the chances for passage of the oleo tax repeal bill are fading.

Most of the bill's supporters blamed Senator Robert A. Taft for what they called his "lack of enthusiasm" for the measure. Taft has said he favors it.

The repealer has been passed by the House and reported favorably by the Senate Finance Committee.

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AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE
SUPPLEMENT

Are You REGISTERED?

WILLIAM GREEN, President · WASHINGTON, D. C., FRIDAY, JUNE 4, 1948 · GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer

Meany Says Defense Program Is Vital As Guard Against Russian Aggression

New York.—Declaring that we "cannot gamble our security upon peace talk from dictators," George Meany, secretary-treasurer of the American Federation of Labor, declared that "a broad and modern national defense program is "vital and indispensable" to guard against the threatened aggression of Soviet Russia.

In an interview with Philip Pearl, the AFL's publicity director, broadcast over Station WOR in cooperation with the New York and New Jersey State Federations of Labor, Mr. Meany likened the peace talk of Russian officials to Hitler's pre-war tactics. He said:

"Russia today is using the same tactics, talking peace to cover up a campaign of world-wide aggression."

While stating that he did not think that war is necessarily anticipated, that we have to carry out its aims, the AFL official warned against the Russian infiltration technique which proved so successful in Czechoslovakia, where, as the first step, Soviet supporters gained control of the labor movement.

Mr. Meany reviewed the world-wide activities of the AFL in combating the Soviet menace. He said:

"We have moved into the picture wherever we could do effective work in checkmating the spread of communism in labor unions. For instance, we were very active in the recent elections in Italy and contributed in no small degree to the crushing defeat of the communists in those elections.

"I don't say that boastfully because the Russians themselves have recognized the effectiveness of that work by broadcasting denunciations of the American Federation of Labor and its representatives over the Moscow radio. Those radio attacks were very encouraging to us because Moscow only screams when it's hurt."

AFL sponsorship of the conference of trade union leaders in Europe to rally support behind the Marshall Plan proved most effective in spiking the vigorous efforts of the Soviet-dominated World Federation of Trade Unions to sabotage the European recovery Program, Mr. Meany said.

In South America, where the Russian aims are pushed by Vincente Lombardo Toledano, Stalin's chief lieutenant in the Western Hemisphere," Mr. Meany reported that the AFL's assistance helped to crystallize the opposition of the free trade union movements to communism which led to the formation of the new Inter-American Confederation of Workers.

Turning to the home-front, the AFL official criticized Congress for playing into the hands of the communists and making it more difficult for the AFL to wage its battle against Red infiltration tactics. He said:

"Congress, in recent years, has played right into the hands of the Communists. It has enacted the Taft-Hartley bill, which curtails and restricts the freedom of labor unions and can only result in weakening their resistance to communist infiltration.

"Congress, at the same time, has failed to enact legislation to check subversive activity in the social justice. That kind of reactionary Congress will foster Communism instead of halting its spread. I have told you how we are now effectively the American Federation of Labor are carried on the fight against Communism. Certainly so far as foreign movements are concerned, the American Federation of Labor constitutes a first line of defense against a Communist fifth-column. It has enacted the role and carry on, Congress has done everything it can to interfere with us.

Named To ECA Posts

BORIS SHISKIN
Appointed chief of the labor division of the Paris office of the Economic Cooperation Administration as Boris Shishkin, chief economist for the AFL.

BERT M. JEWELL
Former president of the AFL's Railway Employes Department, Bert M. Jewell, was named labor advisor on the Washington staff of Paul G. Hoffman, ECA administrator.

Shishkin, Jewell Appointed To High Posts On ECA Staff

Washington.—Boris Shishkin, chief economist for the American Federation of Labor, has been appointed head of the labor division of the European activities of the Economic Cooperation Administration.

Shishkin, who was named to the post by Paul G. Hoffman, ECA administrator, will serve on the staff of U. S. Special Representative W. Averell Harriman and will assume responsibility for labor and manpower matters in administration of the ECA program in European countries.

The ECA also announced the appointment of two other top labor leaders to Mr. Hoffman's Washington staff as advisers on labor policy matters.

They are Bert Mark Jewell, former president of the AFL's Railway Employes Department and international representative of the AFL Railway Labor Executives Association, and Clinton S. Golden of the CIO, who is the labor adviser to the American Mission for Aid to Greece.

In announcing the appointment of his labor representatives, Mr. Hoffman said that he considered the Economic Cooperation Administration "particularly fortunate to obtain the services of men with such distinguished reputations and stature in the labor field and with such outstanding background and experience."

He pointed out that besides their trade union posts, the men had previously held responsible positions dealing with government labor policy.

"It is obvious," Mr. Hoffman said, "that the success of the economic recovery program greatly depends on the active participation of labor, both here and abroad, and on its understanding of the problems and operation involved. Messrs. Shishkin, Jewell, and Golden will play an important part in guiding and developing this essential aspect of the recovery program."

In addition to his AFL duties, Shishkin has served on more than a score of government commissions and agencies. He was a member of the President's Commission on Civil Rights and is the AFL representative on the labor-management advisory committee to the Secretary of Labor. The AFL economist has also obtained recognition in nongovernmental activities, and was recently elected president of the National Bureau of Economic Research. He is the first labor representative to hold this post.

Importation of Mexican Labor Attacked By Mitchell, Head of AFL Farm Union

Washington.—H. L. Mitchell, president of the AFL's National Farm Labor Union, called for immediate suspension of a labor recruiting agreement signed this year by the United States and Mexico.

The importation of Mexican farm workers under the agreement is a double-edged sword to cut down labor standards in the American fields, he declared.

"The operation of this agreement," Mitchell said, "comes at a time when Mexican employers are making a campaign to revive downward Mexican labor standards along the lines of the Taft-Hartley law."

In calling for the suspension of the agreement, under which more than 60,000 Mexicans may be imported this year, Mitchell released an analysis of its terms. The analysis lists 12 major violations of the Mexican constitution and the Mexican federal labor code.

"These violations," Mitchell stated, "show that the agreement is a weak compromise between the higher labor standards and the notoriously inadequate legal protection afforded the United States farm worker." Instead of specific obligations on employers, there are mere substitutes "requiring United States laws, mythical practices and inapplicable customs, or perfectly equitable principles to be interpreted by the employers."

A trend has been set in motion," Mitchell added, "which will eventually affect every living standards in every country in the Western Hemisphere. In the light of what is actually happening, the pious resolutions passed by the American conferences sound like so much dream talk and completely out of touch with reality."

The National Farm Labor Union is currently engaged in an organizing drive in the Di Giorgio Fruit Corporation in the Arvin, Calif. area. Recognition has used Mexican nationals to work behind the picket lines set up by the union at the Di Giorgio ranch. Further importation of Mexican labor is expected to aid Di Giorgio, according to the union.

The union announced the national release of its documentary film, "Harvest in the Valley of Plenty." This film will be given its first public showing in Washington.

Congressional Watch-dog Unit Votes Down T-H Law Change

Committee Action Kills Proposed Change For This Year

Washington.—The Congressional "Watch-dog" Committee on Labor-Management Relations voted to do nothing about the Taft-Hartley law this year.

Thus, in effect, the committee gave its blessing to the law as it stands despite the overwhelming evidence presented by labor spokesmen showing the ill-effects of the law upon labor-management relations throughout the nation.

The action was taken by the committee after one week of the scheduled three weeks of hearings called by Senator Robert H. Hall to consider proposed amendments to the law. Meanwhile, with announcement of the committee's decision, a parade of industry witnesses appeared before the committee using it as a sounding board to support the present law or to recommend "tougher" amendments.

The one amendment on which there appeared to be some chance of action was the call for the elimination of the requirement that the National Labor Relations Board conduct elections before a union shop election can be authorized. Even this week by the board in the case of the Weirton Steel Co.

Senator Hall was reported to have said that he saw no need to change the Taft-Hartley law. This statement was by Senator Irving Ives of New York and Representative Gerald W. Landis of Indiana.

Despite the machinery of the NLRB has broken down hopelessly amidst an avalanche of petitions for election petitions, and despite the fact that unions have won by majorities of the elections conducted so far, Ball said he expected the board "to get over the hump by next fall."

Senator Ball's decision, was supported by Ray Smethurst, counsel for the National Association of Manufacturers, who urged continuation of the election procedure.

On the other hand, representatives of the construction industry supported Thomas J. Gray, president of the AFL's Building and Construction Trades Department, in opposition to the union shop polls.

James D. Marshall, assistant managing director of the Associated General Contractors of America, Inc., told the committee that the requirement of the NLRB conduct an early election under conditions where the closed shop had recently prevailed in the construction industry "is only a most complicated, time-consuming and expensive process of demonstrating a self-evident truth."

Ralph A. MacMullan, secretary-manager of the Associated General Contractors of America, Detroit Chapter, Inc., told of the unnatural difficulties of holding elections where the life of the bargaining unit was no longer than the life of the project.

The NAM spokesman, testifying on other proposed amendments, urged the complete ban on industry-wide bargaining and asserted that the law making unions liable under the antitrust laws. He also supported a proposal advanced by Senator Ball to relieve the burden on the NLRB by chaneling labor cases into the federal courts.

Proposed Bill Extends Social Security To 3,500,000 At Employers' Option

Washington.—Coverage under the federal social security system will be extended to about 3,500,000 workers, but only at their employers' option under the terms of a measure approved by the House Ways and Means Committee.

The approved program falls far short of both the comprehensive social security revision advocated by the American Federation of Labor and the improvements recommended by President Truman.

One of the most glaring defects in the proposal, according to Nelson H. Cruikshank, the AFL's director of social insurance activities, is the failure to liberalize benefits payable under the law which, in March, averaged $26 monthly for retired workers.

Under the terms of the measure, 3,500,000 to 4,000,000 employes of states, counties, municipalities and tax-exempt organizations such as churches and charitable institutions would be covered by old-age and survivors' insurance if their employers chose.

This would be done through compacts with the federal government whereby coverage would have to be given for at least 7 years. If the employer canceled his compact then, employes would be credited with benefits earned by the payment of social security taxes during the period of coverage.

Eight other classifications of workers not now covered would be automatically brought under the insurance system upon enactment of the bill. An estimated 250,000 to 300,000 would be affected.

They include domestic help employed by college fraternities and clubs, employes of horticultural organizations, employes of fraternal insurance organizations; elected servants of employes of the Tennessee Valley Authority, employes of American-owned international air lines and employes of farm loan and farm credit institutions.

Also, persons engaged in off-the-farm packing, drying and similar preparation of agricultural products and civilian employes of army and navy stores.

The bill would also permit beneficiaries to earn up to $40 a month without disqualifying themselves for payments. The present limit is $15.

Supersenority for Veterans in U. S. Jobs Upheld by Unanimous High Court Ruling

Washington.—Veterans have first claim on government jobs, even though others have longer service or better ratings, a unanimous ruling of the Supreme Court held.

The justices agreed that the Civil Service Commission rules in force for the last 4 years, which give ex-servicemen "supersenority," were lawful. This means the 800,000 veterans now on government payrolls, about 45 per cent of the total, will keep their jobs as long as their ratings are "good" or better.

Last year the court held that men who left private jobs for the armed forces had a right to get them back but on no better terms than before. So the veterans were liable to be laid off ahead of nonveterans who had been on the job longer.

Justice Black said for the court that Congress had given veterans on the public payroll a higher preference than was given those in private jobs. "It is a policy adopted by Congress," said Black, "and our province is not to interpret the act, not to override the congressional policy."

The attack on the Civil Service Commission rules was brought to the court by Earle W. Hilton, who worked 12 years at the Charleston (S. C.) navy yard. Then he and others like him were laid off, while veterans who had less seniority but more pull were kept. Hilton's counsel argued that some of these veterans had been employed in shipbuilding by those being laid off.

ILO Report Favors Guaranteed Wages; Cites Factors Conducive to Higher Pay

Montreal.—Widespread adoption of guaranteed wage plans would help stabilize the economy, not only consumer goods but would not be sufficient in itself to eliminate major fluctuations in the business cycle.

This was one of the conclusions in a world report on wages made public by the International Labor Office. The report will be discussed by government, labor and employer representatives from 56 countries at the ILO's annual conference, opening in San Francisco June 19.

The report predicted that guaranteed pay plans would raise general productivity, reduce labor turnover and absenteeism, improve satisfaction of workers, but that these benefits would not wholly counteract the probable increase in production costs that would result from the higher minimum of wage guarantees. The ILO economists said such guarantees would be less easy to apply in the durable goods field than in the manufacture of consumer goods.

Turning to the possibility of establishing higher wages and full employment without inflation, the ILO expressed the view that most countries would have to adopt drastic controls to achieve such an objective now.

"The fiscal, monetary and other measures which would be required in order to maintain full employment without inflation in the face of any major change in the general level of wages might well be of no drastic and far-reaching a character as to be unacceptable to the community concerned," the ILO warned.

The report said the purchasing power of workers in the United States, which had risen during the war, dropped in 1946 and 1947 after the abandonment of price controls. In contrast, the report pointed out, real wages continued to rise in Great Britain, Australia and Argentina, "where price controls and the wage-stabilization period were kept closer to their wartime strength and scope."

In considering the problem of higher wages without inflation, the ILO economists listed the following factors as favorable to the granting of higher wages without concurrent price increases:

1. Return to industry of efficient young people now in the forces.

2. Long-delayed replacement of industrial equipment.

3. Introduction of wartime improved techniques.

4. Expansion of output in industries which were obliged to operate on a restricted basis during the war.

5. Reduction of overtime and night work costs.

6. Increased productivity resulting from the peacetime shorter workweek.

7. Lower freight rates due to elimination of wartime transportation and insurance risks.

8. Reduced corporation taxes in some countries.

Union Labor Legionnaires Parley To Urge Repeal of Taft-Hartley Law

Chicago.—That rank and file members of the American Legion are quite unlike some of the "top brass" which has been dominating the group was dramatically demonstrated at a convention of war veterans here.

It will be the 54th annual convention of the National Conference of Labor Legionnaires. Delegates are to be held June 11 to 13 at the Morrison hotel. Hundreds of delegates are slated to attend. For the most part they will represent veterans' labor posts of the Legion, or labor councils affiliated with the Legion.

The convention call contrasted sharply with that of the usual conservationist's organization, in that repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act was listed as a major objective.

The "Taft-Hartley law is the beginning of the destruction of the Bill of Rights," the organization declared.

It urged that the convention frame a program for an all-out "Register and Vote" drive among "vote" so as to defeat the sponsors of anti-labor legislation and elect real progressives in their stead.

Leading speaker at the parley will be President William Green of the AFL, whose talk will be carried over a national radio hookup.

Plan to Increase Railroad Pensions Agreed Upon by Union, Industry Heads

Washington.—Rail union leaders and representatives of management agreed on a proposal to increase pension rates for retired workers by 20 percent.

The agreement, which will affect about 200,000 railroad employes, assures, observers believe, prompt passage of a bill by the Congress authorizing the liberalized provisions. The House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee has approved the measure.

The pending legislation provides:

1. A 20 percent increase in all railroad retirement pensions and annuities, and a "lump sum payment" provision guaranteeing that every railroad worker, his widow or other "survivors," will get back at least what the worker paid into the retirement fund, plus interest.

These are substantially the provisions of the original Crosser bill to amend the Railroad Retirement Act.

2. The bill contains a new unemployment tax "sliding scale" requested by the carriers, but with modifications designed to assure that the fund will remain ample to pay unemployment benefits to railroad workers who are unemployed or laid off in future years.

At present, the fund has a reserve of over $1 billion, and the unemployment tax paid by the railroads is 3 percent of their payrolls.

Under the sliding scale, the tax will vary between 2 percent and a maximum of 4 percent, according to the amount of money in the fund.

If the fund ever drops to $250 million, the carriers will start paying 3 percent to build it up again. As the fund grows, the tax will be reduced until it becomes one-half of 1 percent when the fund contains $450 million or more.

Thus, as a result of the agreement with the carriers and labor representation in Congress, railroad workers will have their unemployment and sickness benefits are safeguarded, and those who retired now or in the future, they will receive a 20 percent boost in their pensions or annuity.

PRIVATE OPINION POLLS HIT BY CARPENTERS UNIT

New York.—Condemnation of privately operated public opinion polls as "utterly misleading and unscientific" was expressed here by Charles W. Hanson, president of the New York State Council of Carpenters and chairman of the Carpenters Nonpartisan Committee for Repeal and Defeat of Antilabor Legislation. The committee is presently conducting a large-scale organizational and educational campaign among the 40,000 New York union carpenters and their families.

Singling out a report on the Taft-Hartley law in the current issue of Look magazine, Mr. Hanson called the main contentions of the poll "contrary to facts." Labor opposition to the law is not lessening and union-management relations have not improved, he declared. On the contrary, opposition now at an all-time high and unrest is prevalent throughout labor in spite of the law, he stated.

The union leader also refuted claims that the main provisions of the T-H Act have the approval of a majority of union members. Charging that the poll was slanted and its questions so designed as to bring forth the desired answers, he said: "Far more significant is the fact that these questions have nothing to do with the principal issue—namely, whether the Taft-Hartley Act is a mortal threat to organized labor and that the people look upon it as a symbol of union hatred."

MOTOR VEHICLE SALES DOWN 11% IN MARCH

Detroit.—Model change-overs in several automotive plants, continued material shortages, plus a two-week lay in the month caused April sales of motor vehicles from U. S. factories to drop 11 percent below the March total, the Automobile Manufacturers Association announced.

Total factory sales in April reached 483,062 units, including 398,071 passenger cars, 128,963 motor trucks and 1,048 motor coaches. During March, 492,018 units were produced, including 549,998 passenger cars, 140,696 motor trucks and 1,400 motor coaches.

March truck and bus output was the highest monthly total ever achieved by truck producers.

Factory sales of motor vehicles in the first 4 months of 1948 totaled 1,- 975,100 units, or nearly 10 percent above the 1,565,635 vehicles produced in the comparable period of 1947, the AMA said.

NEW PLAN TO EMPLOY UNITED STATES WORKERS

Washington.—The Civil Service Commission announced a streamlined hiring procedure designed to help federal agencies recruit certain types of "scarce" employes.